

Message Text

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TO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

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CHEROKEE

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS:PFOR SY US EG

SUBJECT: FAHMY ON SYRIA

FOR SECRETARY FROM SISCO

REF: CAIRO 10528

1. YOU WILL HAVE SEEN HERMANN EILTS' REPORT (CAIRO 10528)
ON FAHMY'S DISAPPOINTMENT THAT WE HAVE NOT AS YET TAKEN
FIRM ACTION WITH KING HUSSEIN TO BREAK UP THE SYRIAN-
JORDANIAN COMMON FRONT THAT HAS DEVELOPED.

2. SUBSTANTIVELY, THREE POINTS STAND OUT IN MY MIND:

A. WE MADE A MAJOR EFFORT IN THE CONTEXT OF THE HAWK EX-
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CHANGES TO PERSUADE THE JORDANIANS TO MAKE A POSITIVE PUB-
LIC STATEMENT ON THE SINAI AGREEMENT. THEY SAID THEY
COULD SPEAK POSITIVELY ABOUT THE U.S. ROLE BUT WOULD HAVE

TO EXPRESS RESERVATIONS ABOUT SUBSTANCE OF AGREEMENT. THEY, LIKE SYRIA, ARE SUSPICIOUS THAT THEY WILL BE LEFT OUT OF THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS AND THEY ARE GENERALLY SUSPICIOUS OF EGYPT. THEY WOULD SAY THEIR OPPOSITION TO SINAI II WILL DIMINISH WHEN IT IS DEMONSTRATED THAT A CONTINUATION OF THE DIPLOMATIC PROCESS CAN BE BUILT ON THE FOUNDATION IT PROVIDES. JORDAN, MOREOVER, SEES ADVANTAGES IN THE CLOSER RELATIONSHIP WITH SYRIA THAT GOES

BEYOND THE COMMON ATTITUDE TOWARD SINAI II, THOUGH THE LATTER IS CERTAINLY AN IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION. THUS IT SEEMS UNLIKELY THAT WE COULD DRIVE A WEDGE BETWEEN SYRIA AND JORDAN IF WE WANTED TO--CERTAINLY NOT WITHOUT A SHOW-DOWN.

B. WE ARE DOING WHAT WE CAN WITH SAUDI ARABIA AND ALGERIA TO EXPLAIN THAT SINAI II IS A BUILDING BLOCK AND NOT A STOPPING PLACE.

C. OUR MAIN EFFORT TO TURN SYRIA AROUND WILL HAVE TO COME IN THE CONTEXT OF OUR NEXT DIPLOMATIC MOVES. HUSSEIN HAS SAID HE WOULD DO WHAT HE COULD TO URGE MODERATION.

3. IN SHORT, I THINK WE ARE IN A POSITION WHERE WE MUST WORK CAREFULLY TO KEEP SYRIA ON A MODERATE COURSE RATHER THAN ATTEMPTING A DIRECT EFFORT TO ISOLATE HER. IT IS ONE THING FOR EGYPT TO PURSUE THAT OBJECTIVE IN AN ARAB CONTEXT. IT IS ANOTHER FOR US TO ATTEMPT ACTIONS WHICH THE ARABS WOULD SEE AS "FURTHER" EFFORTS TO DIVIDE THEM. THERE IS A RISK, ALSO, OF OUR BECOMING CAUGHT UP IN THE DISPUTE BETWEEN SYRIA AND EGYPT, WHICH HAS SPREAD BEYOND ITS ORIGINS IN THE DIFFERENCE OVER SINAI II.

4. HERMANN IS TODAY ON HIS WAY BACK TO WASHINGTON FOR THE LAST FEW DAYS OF PREPARATION FOR THE SADAT VISIT. IN HIS ABSENCE, I RECOMMEND THAT WE LEAVE THIS ISSUE IN ABEYANCE UNTIL YOUR TALKS WITH FAHMY. YOU HAVE ALREADY SENT ONE MESSAGE ON THE SUBJECT. INGERSOLL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TOSEC, POLICIES, AGREEMENTS, FOREIGN RELATIONS, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, PEACE TALKS, POLITICAL SITUATION, CAT-C, CHEROKEE 10/21/75
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 21 OCT 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: johnsorg
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975STATE250577
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: HHTAUNDERS:HE
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: P840083-1154
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19751035/aaaabfoi.tel
Line Count: 105
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN NODS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Reference: 75 CAIRO 10528
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: johnsorg
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 01 AUG 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <01 AUG 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <24 DEC 2003 by johnsorg>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FAHMY ON SYRIA
TAGS: PFOR, PEPR, SY, US, EG, JO, (FAHMY, ISMAIL)
To: SECRETARY
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006